9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

585 whilst numbers of people are collected on the hills and eminences to behold this race for the bottle. The first person to reach the bride's house is victorious; he is rewarded with a bottle (? of poteen) which is drunk by the company and then broken by the bridegroom. Next "a cake of oatmeal or flour, called the bride's cake, is broken over the bride's head, and is greedily seized upon by young persons present for the purpose of placing a portion of it under their pillow. Another scene of noisy festivity then commences, which often terminates in riot and bloodshed between the different parties."

Fig. 112.

585 532 A wedding custom recorded within the last 50 years from Sligo, Mayo, Galway and Kerry was the wearing of straw masks by "straw-boys" or "soppers," who went about begging money and drink and threatening mischief. The styles of mask varied from one district to another: we illustrate (Fig. 112) the pattern worn in Mayo. It is hardly necessary to add that parallels to this kind of ceremonial dress and mime can be found in many parts of the world. Among the practices connected with childbirth attention has been 846 drawn to survivals of the "couvade," whereby the husband is supposed to share the woman's pains. It is stated that in

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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788
-532

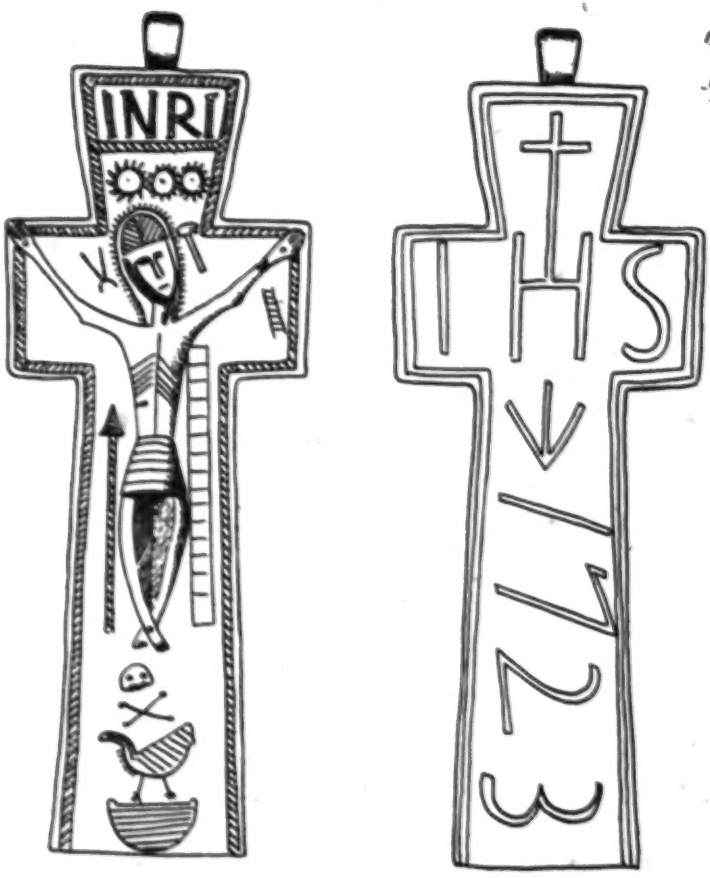

FIG. 84. Portable crucifix ('penal cross'). Found at Hilltown, Co. Down.

dancing, shouting, fiddling, courting, drinking and fighting'.[1] 796
In some celebrated instances the holy wells are associated [786]
with lakes and islands, for example Gouganebarra at the source 788
of the River Lee, and the most famous of all Irish pilgrimages 778

[1]Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character Etc.*, 1, 281.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

527 776 It was popularly believed that the saint wandered through the countryside on the eve of her feast day. Bread was left on the doorstep, and in some districts it was the custom to prepare a small bed of rushes or birch twigs and place it by the fire so that Bridie might come in and rest. Sometimes the last sheaf of harvest was used for the purpose. In south-western Ireland a [532] doll made of straw—or decorated churn-staff—was carried [292] from house to house by 'Biddy Boys', wearing straw masks such as are used by mummers and by strawboys at weddings, and singing songs in honour of the saint. They would solicit gifts and end the day in jollification. The evening was celebrated [264] by a supper of pancakes taken from a plate laid on a rush cross, [787] and as on the other quarter-days prognostications were made. A ribbon or piece of cloth exposed on St. Briget's Eve became [789] endowed with curative powers. It was believed that no work which involved the turning of a wheel should take place on the saint's day. The placing of a periwinkle in each corner of the kitchen likewise hints at a remote pre-agricultural origin for the festival, but it came to be associated with the pastoral promise of spring, of warmth, new grass, lambs and milk. It is said that the saint placed her foot in water on her feast day so that on that day it begins to warm up each year.

St. Patrick is credited with carrying the process a stage further by putting a stone in the water, or alternatively 'turning [805] up the warm side of the stone'. 17th March marks the end of winter and the starting-point of work in the fields. The country- [221] man likes to have his first ridge of potatoes planted on that day, and he is not greatly moved by the patriotic celebrations which are anyhow more in evidence in New York and Boston than in Ireland. Traditionally the cult of St. Patrick is strongest in Ulster, where hundreds of churches and holy wells are named in his honour, and according to legend he was reluctantly accepted as patron saint in some of the other Irish regions. They say in [191] Ulster that Connachtmen speak with husky accents because their forebears stole and ate St. Patrick's goat. Like Columbkille, Patrick is remembered for his curses as well as his prophecies, [824] for instance he cursed the rushes that pricked him when he rested, so that every green rush has a brown tip.

527 To refer to all the associations of the movable feasts of

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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775 gorgeous vestments. He shut his eyes in terror and prayed, and when he ventured to look again he saw only "the clouds flitting over the roofless church and the old ravens croaking and wheeling over their nests on the tower top."[8] At Stamer Park I was told, in 1873, that "a string of monks" used formerly to pass up the garden to the Abbey of Ennis, but, even then, it was only a vague tradition. A 'she-ghost' haunted the canal bridge of Clonlara, while it was being built in 1769, and was at last exorcised by a slab, still remaining, with her figure cut on it in low relief and the date (Plate XIV.). This figure closely resembles the grotesque (and usually indecent) carvings of prophylactic female figures called "hags of the castle," and now [532] *sheelanagigs* from a well-known carving in County Cork. Two undoubted examples of these figures remain in Clare, a much-defaced one above the door of Kilnaboy church, and a perfect one, struggling with two dragons, on the ornate, and possibly eleventh-century, sill at Rath-Blathmaic church.[9] The Clonlara figure, if older than 1769, may have been brought from one of the ruined towers of Rinroe, Newtown, and Aharinagh, not far away.

The back avenue near the castle of Teermicbrain or Adelphi was haunted, until 1885 at least, by a dark shadowy figure. A "grey man" haunted the lonely storm-beaten shell of Dunlicka Castle, on the cliffs near Kilkee, one of the wildest and most beautiful parts of that glorious coast. He tried to point out hidden treasure, but failed owing to the fears of the man who saw him, and who, when at last venturing back, could not remember the exact hiding-place. The disgusted treasure guardian has made no later attempt.[10] Doonmore, a shore castle farther north, was notorious for the ghastly sounds heard in its vaults, probably caused by waves lapping into rock crannies,

[8] Told by an old peasant of his grandfather, *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. viii. (1841), p. 548. The same person one moonlight night saw a dim figure making signs, and, following it, found his cow with her legs firmly fixed in a hole and in great danger.

[9] See Plate XIV. and the figures in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. xxiv., pp. 27, 33.

[10] From two residents at Moveen in 1908.

[P. 206]